

Destination:

Each issue, the *Pathways* staff chooses a notable locale – a place worth visiting – and explores the paths that lead to it, spotlighting attractions, points of interest, oddities and other items of note along the way.

After all, getting there is half the adventure.

By Matt Hiebert

As you travel the winding roads that follow the Mississippi River, the centuries seem to roll away with every mile. Routes 61 and 55 thread through villages older than the United States and touch archaeological sites that thrived 10,000 years ago. They mark the route of the Great River Road and cross paths with a monument that celebrates America's expansion to the west.

The journey begins just off Route 61 in a place so packed with history it could have been our final destination.

Ste. Genevieve sits on the state's eastern border with a population just topping 4,000. At first it seems to be an ordinary Missouri town, but it doesn't take a visitor long to see it's a lot more than that.

Travel deeper into Ste. Genevieve – known as “Ste. Gen” among the residents – and you get the feeling you've stepped into a time machine. Dozens of the houses, shops, restaurants, inns, churches and taverns lining its narrow streets are more than two centuries old. Some are even older than that. In fact, Ste. Gen is the oldest community in Missouri.

Although thousands of visitors come to the historical town every year, don't get the idea that it's some kind of museum set up for tourists.

“We are a living community,” says resident and shop owner Richard Zielinski. “We're not like some of the Revolutionary War sites out east that exist because of the tourists. As my wife puts it: we're not a tourist attraction – we are tourist *attractive*.”

When not running his curio shop on Market Street, Zielinski drives a town school bus and serves as the resident locksmith. If it fits his schedule, he will also be happy to impart some of Ste. Gen's history from a citizen's view.

The Road Between Saints

*The past still lives
along Missouri's eastern border.*



Great River Road Interpretative Center



A display demonstrating the unique construction of several Ste. Genevieve residences



Louis Bolduc house

“Tourists have been coming to Ste. Gen since the ‘20s,” he says. “But they were a different kind of tourist. They were people who had preservation in mind. They were interested in the town’s history. Preservation has been part of the community for a long time.”

This fact is evident at nearly every street corner. You can hardly walk 10 feet with-

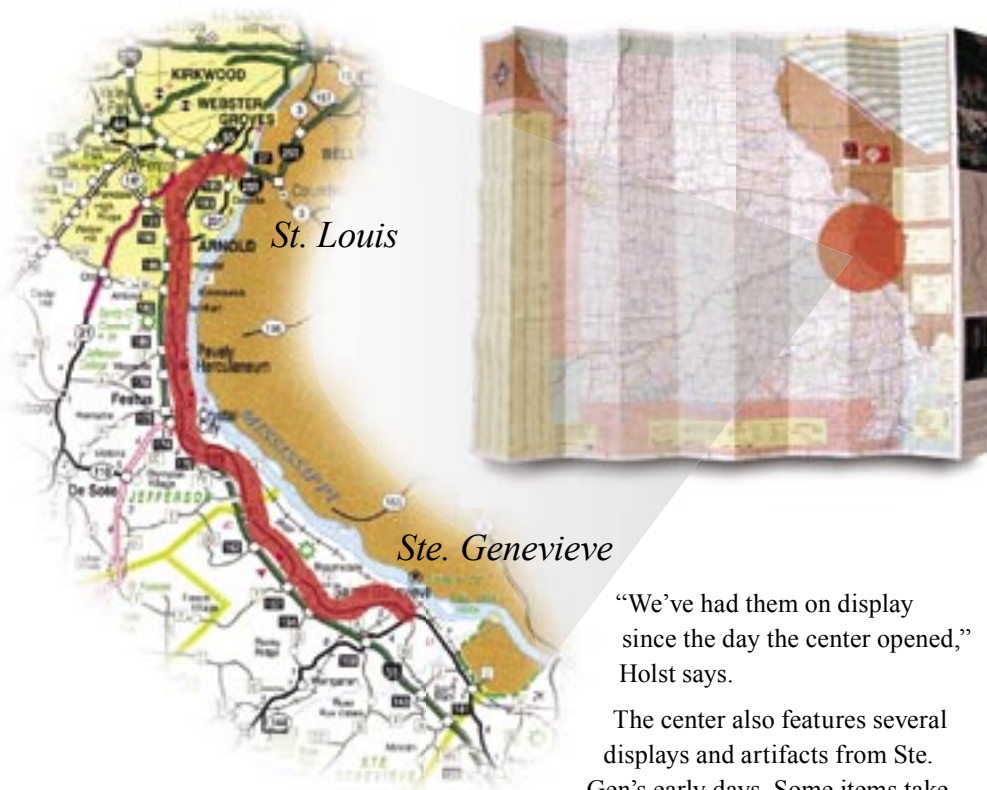


Richard Zielinski, Ste. Genevieve resident

out encountering a historically significant building: Here’s the first Masonic Lodge west of the Mississippi, over there is the oldest brick building in Missouri, a duel was fought in front of that restaurant.

The buildings are like an architectural catalog spanning 250 years. Styles range from vertical-log, French Colonial to 19th-century German redbrick. There are few structures in the historical side of town that could be considered modern.

To keep the various attractions straight, a visitor’s first stop probably should be the Great River Road Interpretive Center. To get there, just head down Market Street. You’ll



find the center at the corner of Main and Old Plank Road.

“We’re here to help people find the places they want to go,” says Juanita Holst, tour guide for the center. “We have information for most of the local bed and breakfasts, restaurants, shops and galleries.”

One feature of the Interpretive Center is the extensive collection of pencil drawings by Roscoe Misselhorn, a frequent visitor of Ste. Gen who produced dozens of renderings of the local architecture, which he donated to the Interpretive Center in 1989.

“We’ve had them on display since the day the center opened,” Holst says.

The center also features several displays and artifacts from Ste.

Gen’s early days. Some items take visitors back to the town’s prehistoric origins when Native Americans lived there to collect salt from nearby Saline Creek.

Once you’re done with the Interpretive Center, a tour of St. Genevieve’s historic homes should be on the agenda. And you won’t have to look far to find one.

Across the street from the center is one of the town’s most famous residences. Louis Bolduc, a Canadian lead miner, merchant and planter, constructed the Bolduc House in 1770. It was originally built at a different location, but the “great flood” of 1783



Bolduc House wall detail

forced the owners to disassemble it piece-by-piece and rebuild it at the current location. The house features unusual vertical-log construction found almost exclusively in Ste. Genevieve.

But there's more to Ste. Genevieve than the old homes. There's also a long list of bed and breakfasts, restaurants, shops, flea markets, churches, taverns and museums that can occupy a visitor for days.

Mark Aug. 9-10 on your calendar for the Jour de Fete, a huge craft show and French heritage celebration held there every year.

Once you've seen the sights in Ste. Genevieve, it's time to head north, up the Great River Road on Route 61.

This 3,000-mile stretch of scenic roadway begins in Canada and ends at the Gulf of Mexico. The Missouri leg angles down from Keokuk, Iowa, all the way to the tip of the Bootheel, or vice-versa depending on which way you're headed.

"The whole idea for the Great River Road began in Missouri in 1936," explains Mark Kross, assistant to the director of project development for the Missouri Department of Transportation. "The governor at the time had an idea for a parkway along the Mississippi. He wanted people to be able to enjoy the recreational resources the river offered. Ultimately the idea spread to the other nine states involved with the Great River Road."

According to Kross, things really took off when the Mississippi River Parkway Commission was founded in 1938. Kross, the current secretary and executive director of the Missouri MRPC, says the commission

helped lay the foundation for the entire corridor.

"The MRPC works to preserve, promote and enhance the road so that people can access its cultural and environmental attractions," Kross says.

Following the route north about 30 miles, you come across the twin towns of Festus and Crystal City.

Make sure you're hungry by the time you hit the corner of Route 61 and Bailey Street in Crystal City. You'll need all the appetite you can muster to finish one of the Jumbo Burgers at Gordon's Stoplight Drive-In.

Gordon's is a small restaurant that has been serving their gargantuan burgers and Coney Island chilidogs since 1948. Their old-fashioned dining counter, mushroom-shaped stools, and out-front grill are like a snapshot from a bygone era.

"I live 20 miles away, and I come here every day," says Jack Baner, a patron catching an early lunch. "I guess that makes me a regular."

For the last six year, Phil Sanders has stood behind the grill as Gordon's cook, making sure both locals and out-of-towners are well fueled.

"We get people who drive all the way down from Chicago for our jumbos," Sanders says. "They'll buy 36 of them, freeze them and take them back with them."

Gordon's Jumbo Burger consists of a massive hamburger patty, topped with coleslaw, onion and barbeque sauce. It may not be the

typical mass-market burger, but if Gordon's has been in business for 55 years, somebody sure likes them.

If the jumbo isn't big enough for you, take the dare and eat a "Quadzilla." Quad, meaning "four," and zilla, meaning "Man, that's a big hamburger!" With four patties stacked



Gordon's Stoplight Drive-In

on top of each other, it is truly of mammoth proportions.

And speaking of mammoths ...

As you cruise up Route 61, consider taking a small detour at Exit 186. Not just from the highway but also in time ... to about 12,000 years ago.

Take the exit to Imperial Main Street and follow the signs to the Mastodon Museum. There you will find a window to an age when man was new to North America and giant prehistoric creatures ruled the earth. And you thought Ste. Genevieve had old stuff!



In The Mode

The Transportation Quiz

The origins of the Mastodon Museum, operated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, go back the early 1800s when something unusual appeared along a weath-ering creek bank. Residents knew these strange objects were some kind of bones, but they didn't know from what.

Entrepreneur and museum owner Albert Koch investigated the bones and deter-mined – incorrectly – that they were from a previously unknown prehistoric animal. He named his discovery the Missouri Leviathan and proceeded to travel the world showing it off.

“He displayed it in a P.T. Barnum-fashion,” explains Nancy Smith, historical site man-ager for the Mastodon Museum. “He basi-cally shipped it around in a circus tent and sold tickets.”

Smith said a British comparative anatomist determined the true nature of the bones while Koch was touring Europe. He con-vinced Koch they were from a Mastodon, which pretty much ended the sideshow. Koch later sold the bones to the British Museum in London where they still reside.

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Work zones are a necessary part of building and maintaining Missouri's highways. They're also places where workers and motorists are at added risk.

As you travel around the state, please pay special attention in work zones. Stay alert. Watch your speed. Obey instructions and drive courteously. And always, use seatbelts and child-safety seats.

What's the difference between a safe trip and a crash? The difference is YOU. Drive smart.

Take this quiz to learn more about work-zone safety.

1 Missouri's work zone activities include which of the following?

- a. Construction
- b. Bridge inspection
- c. Mowing
- d. Snow removal
- e. All of the above

2 Between 1997 and 2001, how many people were injured in Mis-souri work-zone crashes?

- a. 1,057
- b. 2,490
- c. 4,265
- d. 536

3 In 2001, the top contributing cir-cumstance of Missouri's overall work-zone crash total was:

- a. inattention
- b. drinking or drug use by motorist
- c. improper lane change by motorist
- d. driver inexperience

4 Motorists will find work zones

- a. On city, county and state roadways
- b. Only on state highways
- c. Only during daylight hours

5 A truck mounted attenuator is:

- a. an antenna used to pick up radio instructions by field crews more than 15 miles from district headquarters.
- b. a locker that holds orange vests, cones and barrels.
- c. a safety device attached to MoDOT vehicles that absorbs much of the force inflicted by a crashing auto-mobile.
- d. another name for the flashing arrow sign.

6 If a motorist both speeds and changes lanes in an active work zone where workers are present and a warning sign is nearby, they can expect to receive a fine of:

- a. Double the normal speeding-ticket fine
- b. \$35
- c. \$250
- d. \$500 and up

7 How many MoDOT employees have been killed in work zones since 1945?

- a. 16
- b. 23
- c. 45
- d. 67

Answers: 1 – e; 2 – d; 3 – a; 4 – a; 5 – c; 6 – d; 7 – d.

DeAnne Bonnot is a Public Information coordinator at MoDOT General Headquarters.

Visitors to the museum can see a life-size, fiberglass replica of the bones on display next to the giant ground sloth, another prehistoric mammal that once roamed Missouri.

After the Mastodon Museum, we take a more direct route to the heart of our destination. Leaving the scenic pathway of Route 61/67, we now drive north on Interstate 55, where four lanes move us quickly toward the center of downtown St. Louis.

As the skyline appears on the horizon, you'll see the Gateway Arch to your right.

"When we first started, the whole area was totally abandoned."

Thomas Purcell, Laclede's Landing Redevelopment Corporation

This is easily St. Louis' most recognizable architectural feature. And there is certainly no symbol that better encompasses the history of the city, the state and the growth of the nation. Although it will be our final stop, we've got some other things to take care of first.

After all, Laclede's Landing is right next-door.

As you move up I-55, stay in the right-hand lane and keep an eye out for the Washington Street exit. You'll see helpful signs along the way that say "Arch Parking." Follow them. For only \$5 you can park for nine hours, and with all the sites and features that are within walking distance that price is well worth it.

Laclede's Landing – or just, "the Landing" – covers a nine-block area. Its brick streets and cast-iron facades bring back a St. Louis from 150 years ago when steamboats crowded the Mississippi River and roads were made for horses. Its namesake, Pierre Laclede, was a French fur trapper who established a trading post on the west-

ern bank of the Mississippi. That trading post soon grew into the city we know as St. Louis. It was on this spot that the whole thing started.

But the riverfront property had almost been forgotten before renovation efforts took off in 1976.

"When we first started, the whole area was totally abandoned," says Thomas Purcell, president of Laclede's Landing Redevelopment Corporation. "The buildings were vacant. There were no lights, no trees, no fountains. No personality whatsoever."

That changed quickly as the group encouraged more business to come down to the river. Today Laclede's Landing features more than 50 restaurants, taverns, museums, shops and historical landmarks. There is 600,000 square feet of office space, riverboat casinos, hotels and a light-rail connection. New residential structures also are on the way.

If you arrive around mealtime, count your blessings. It doesn't matter what you want – steak, pasta, fish, salad or a sandwich – you'll find it on the Landing. You can even eat in the same place as senators in Washington D.C. – or at least a close facsimile.

Hannegan's Restaurant and Pub is named after Robert E. Hannegan, a powerful St. Louis political figure from the 1930s and '40s. He has been described as a larger-than-life

character, and the restaurant is set up to honor him and the time in which he lived.

But that's not where the political tribute ends. The décor reinforces the theme. The bold woodwork, green-leather booths and globe table lamps all come together to create an exact replica of the Senate Lounge on Capitol Hill. Political banners and various memorabilia add the final touch. However, there is one detail that is not identical to its Washington D.C. counterpart. At the end of each table are small brass plaques with the names of different senators from the 1920s on them.

"Those are the names of all the senators who voted to repeal prohibition in 1929," explains co-owner Mary Taylor.

While you're there, Mark Taylor, the other co-owner, recommends either the Irish Stew or the Double Rib Pork Chop stuffed with poivrade sauce.

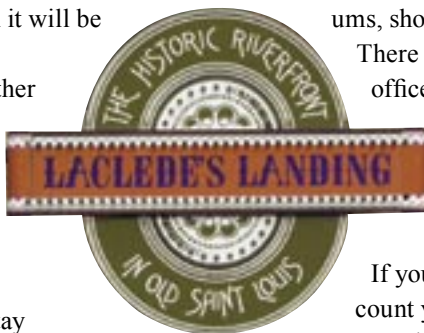
"Both of those items have been on the menu for 24 years," Taylor says. "They have stood the test of time."

After enjoying the dining at Hannegan's, it's time to stroll down the brick street for some shopping. If you're lucky, you can pick up a new shiny clown nose.

A few doors down is one of the Landing's more unusual shops. Walk into Gibbol's and you can feel the magic in the air. Of course, that's largely because it's a magic shop.

In fact, Gibbol's is one of the city's only magic shops. Its aisles and walls are stuffed with costumes, magic tricks, masks, jokes,

Hannegan's at Laclede's Landing



pranks and generally strange merchandise. Resident magician Bob Cole comes in on Thursdays to teach tricks to fledgling tricksters and pull the leg of the stray customer.

“The average age of the people I teach is about 38,” Cole says, fanning a deck of suspicious-looking cards. “A lot of them are lawyers, doctors and salesmen. They’re wanting to learn a trick or two that may help them in their profession, like in a public speaking situation. Magic can open a lot of doors.”

The store also features hundreds of costumes and bizarre clothing accessories. Need a six-foot-long pink feather boa? Look no further. How about a florescent orange fright wig. You’re in the right store! They even have a selection of clown noses to fit any face.

“At Gibbol’s, we want you to pick your nose,” Cole says pointing to an assortment of about 30 red noses.

Now it’s time to stroll across Washington Street to the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, known more simply as the Gateway Arch. Many visitors don’t know it, but the 630-foot tall arch is only one part of a much larger attraction.

“Most people don’t know about the Museum of Westward Expansion or the Old Courthouse,” says Bob Moore, historian for the Jefferson Memorial.

In contrast to the sleek, modern lines of the Arch, the Old Courthouse sits across the street with rows of Greek columns attending its entrance and an ornate dome crowning its roof.

Inside the courthouse, history was made in 1846 when slaves Dred and Harriet Scott sued for their freedom. It took 11 years and two civil trials before the U.S. Supreme



Court finally decided that the Scotts had no rights under the constitution and would remain slaves. The decision helped fuel the fire of the approaching Civil War.

Architecturally, the Old Courthouse is not so grim a reminder of the past. It features a colorful rotunda that is decorated with dozens of restored murals. Several courtrooms have been returned to their original appearance so visitors can capture a sense of its 19th-century origins.

“At Gibbol’s, we want you to pick your nose.”

Bob Cole, resident magician

But as the shadows of the day grow long, we must turn our attention to another piece of architecture across the street.

The Gateway Arch stands on the bank of the Mississippi. Built in the early ’60s, it is a testimony to architectural determination and engineering genius. But it represents much more than that. It is the icon to America’s growth to the west, a tribute to the explorers, pioneers and national leaders who expanded our borders to the Pacific Ocean.



As you approach the arch, a distinct sense of dizziness sets in as you crane to see the top. The structure is impressive from a distance, but up close it is ... well ... monumental.

Ironically, you enter the towering structure by descending underground. As you follow the gentle ramps that disappear beneath its feet, you suddenly come upon a busy concourse thriving with activity. Shops stand on either side of the mall-like area offering souvenirs to visitors. A ticket counter at one end sells rides to the top of the arch or to one of the two movie theaters housed at its base.

But the main attraction underground is on the west side of the building.

The Museum of Westward Expansion is worth the trip by itself. The museum is laid out in concentric half circles that radiate outward from a life-size statue of Thomas Jefferson. Plaques with various years on them adorn the ceiling.

“The museum is laid out like a wagon wheel,” a park ranger explains to a visiting family. “The spokes lead outward to the people behind the events. The years across



Gibbol’s resident magician, Bob Cole. An assortment of clown noses to fit any face.



the ceiling signify when the event took place.”

Displays range from actual objects preserved from the 18th and 19th centuries to high-tech animatronic displays of people like William Clark. A life-sized teepee complete with authentic Native American artifacts is followed by dioramas of cowboys, cavalymen and a realistic Longhorn bull. Along one wall, rows of Indian Peace medals are displayed under glass cases. These medals were given to Native American leaders in honor of treaty agreements.

Once you finish with the museum you might want to catch a movie. It may not be a multiplex, but the Arch does give you viewing options. You can either watch the wide screen presentation of “Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West,” for the deeper meaning behind the arch, or you can try “Monument to the Dream,” an Oscar-nominated film that takes a look its construction. Both are well worth the entry fee.

After that, it’s time for a ride to the top. For a mere \$8 you can get a brand new perspective on St. Louis and everything around it.

Even the ride to the top of the Arch is interesting. Two trams make trips up either leg every few minutes. The trams are described as “half elevator, half train,” and they are not for the claustrophobic.

A small, 4-foot tall door lets the rider access the tram’s cylindrical compartments. As the tram climbs the interior of the arch’s leg, the rider can feel it rotating with the arc of ascent. Two tiny windows allow the curious a view of the gigantic structure’s innards. As the tram moves upward, pipes, conduits, ductwork, cables, power lines, girder and



Museum of Westward Expansion



Old St. Louis Courthouse

zigzag staircases scroll past a massive backdrop of steel and concrete.

The ride may be interesting, but it pales to the sensation a visitor gets once at the top.

Exiting the tram, you definitely know you’re at the apex of an arch. The corridor is distinctly convex. On either side a half-dozen small, rectangular windows look down upon the city. Outside to the west, St. Louis spreads to the horizon. There’s the Old Courthouse and Busch Stadium. Over there you can see Metropolitan Square and the Eagleton Federal Courthouse. Look straight down and you can see arriving and departing visitors who are much smaller than the clichéd ant comparison.

After a while you pick up other details. You notice that there’s a lot of construction going on down there. To the east, cranes and heavy-construction equipment crawl across the Eads Bridge, re-decking the landmark structure. More cranes and bulldozers are working toward the riverfront.

If everything goes as the Laclede’s Landing Development Corporation plans, new commercial and living centers will soon be sprouting up along the shore of the Mississippi. Access will improve. The riverfront area will grow.



A view from the arch

Thomas Purcell had touched on that growth earlier in the day. Now his words are brought back to mind.

“As we re-energize the area, we improve the character of the riverfront,” he said. “Then it can thrive and compete. It can become a daily destination for the people of St. Louis.”

Although the Jefferson Expansion Memorial has no plans for new construction, its crowds will soon be growing. With the kickoff of the Lewis and Clark 200th anniversary celebration earlier this year, the next few seasons promise to keep the Arch trams busy.

“Right now, we’re averaging 4 million visitors a year,” Moore says. “And with the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial under way, we expect 2004 to be a lot busier than that.” ■

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